



Tom Barrett
Mayor, City of Milwaukee

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MILWAUKEE NAMED AS TOP 20 FINALIST IN BLOOMBERG PHILANTHROPIES' MAYORS CHALLENGE

City's idea selected from more than 300 submissions to compete for \$5 million grand prize

MILWAUKEE – Mayor Barrett today announced Milwaukee has been selected as a finalist for the Bloomberg Philanthropies' Mayors Challenge, a competition created to inspire American cities to generate innovative ideas that solve major challenges and improve city life – and that ultimately can be shared with other cities across the nation.

Milwaukee was selected based on its innovative idea to transform foreclosed properties into community assets that improve public health and spark economic opportunity. HOME GR/OWN is Milwaukee's bold, revolutionary idea that empowers residents and community organizations to transform foreclosed properties into community assets that improve public health and nutritional outcomes, revitalize neighborhoods, and spark economic opportunity. The City owns nearly 4,000 vacant lots and foreclosed homes and will designate a significant portion of them for other creative uses including urban agriculture and urban homesteading.

Milwaukee will now compete against 19 other cities across the country for the \$5 million grand prize as well as one of four additional prizes of \$1 million each.

"We are so honored and excited to have been selected as a finalist," said Mayor Barrett. "Milwaukee is committed to innovation and the Mayors Challenge presents Milwaukee with the opportunity to explore new ideas in innovative ways and engage the public. Our call to action was 'Tournavation,' which yielded an unprecedented response and created a new model for problem solving in our City. I'm grateful to organizations like NEWaukee and Victory Garden Initiative for helping Milwaukee advance as a finalist. I'm looking forward to further refining HOME GR/OWN Milwaukee at Ideas Camp."

A team from Milwaukee will attend Bloomberg Ideas Camp, a two-day gathering in New York City in November during which city teams will work collaboratively with each other and experts to further refine their ideas. Coming out of Camp, the Milwaukee team will have access to additional technical support to prepare their ideas for final submission. Winners will be announced in spring 2013, with a total of \$9 million going to five cities to jumpstart implementation of their ideas.

“Congratulations to Mayor Barrett and the City of Milwaukee for becoming a Mayors Challenge finalist. The response to the Mayors Challenge was extraordinary: bold and innovative ideas were submitted from every corner of the country. We look forward to welcoming the Milwaukee team to Ideas Camp,” said James Anderson, who directs the Government Innovation program at Bloomberg Philanthropies.

The 20 finalist ideas were rated on four key criteria: vision/creativity, ability to implement, potential for impact, and potential for replication. A specially-assembled selection committee, co-chaired by Shona Brown, Senior Vice President and head of Google.org, and Ron Daniel, Bloomberg Philanthropies board member and Former Managing Partner at McKinsey & Company where he is still active, helped select the finalist cities.

About the Mayors Challenge

Mayors of U.S. cities with 30,000 residents or more were eligible to compete in the Mayors Challenge. 305 cities representing 45 states across the country submitted applications by September 14, 2012.

The Mayors Challenge is the latest initiative of Bloomberg Philanthropies’ Mayors Project, which aims to spread proven and promising ideas among cities. Other Mayors Project investments include Cities of Service, Innovation Delivery Teams, and Financial Empowerment Centers.

To learn more about the Mayors Challenge, visit bloomberg.org/mayorschallenge.

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